

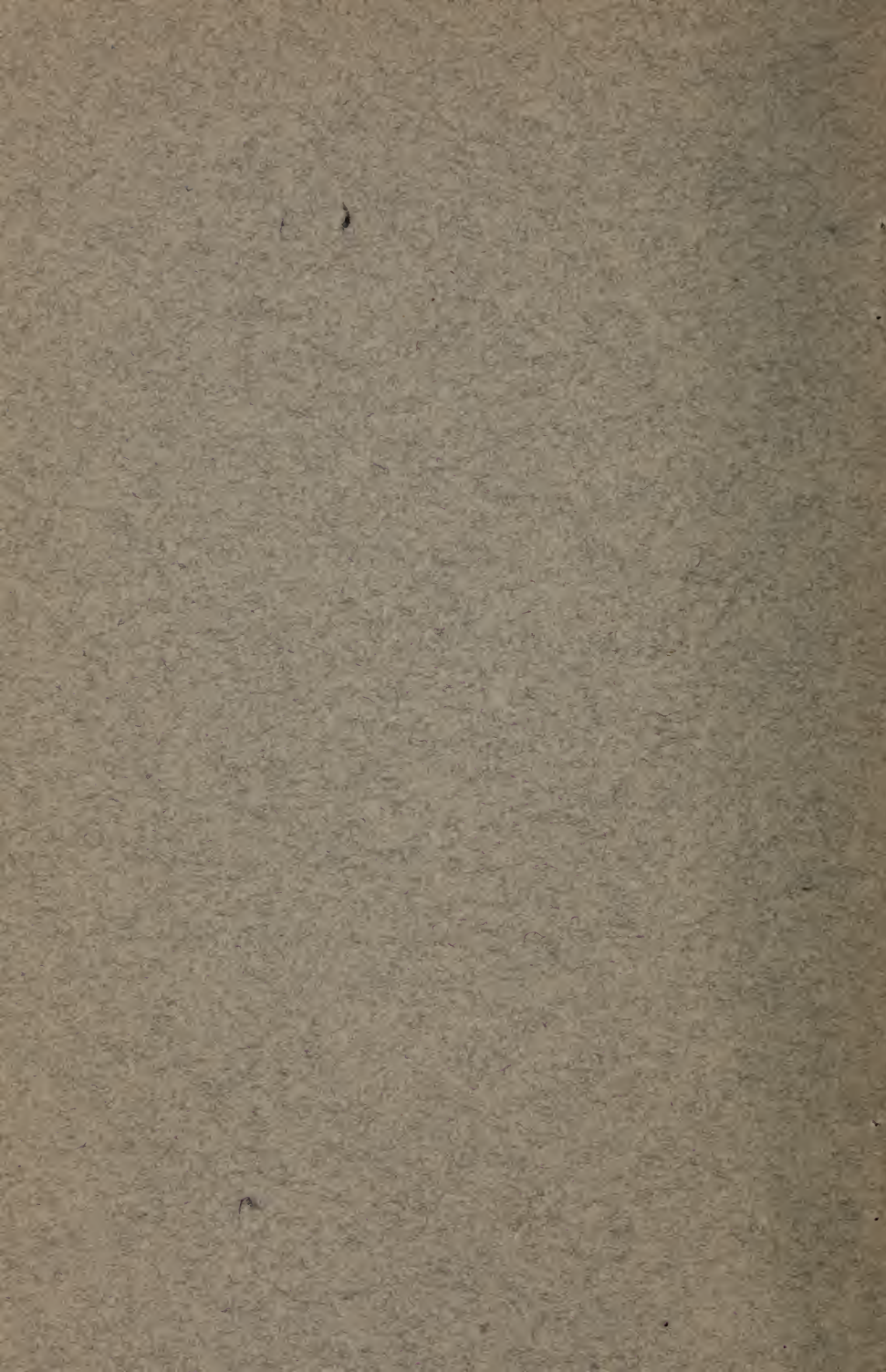
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THE SOUL OF THE NATION

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BACCALAUREATE SERMON DELIVERED
TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH AT THE
BELLEFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ON SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1916, BY CHAN-
CELLOR SAMUEL BLACK McCORMICK.



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THE SOUL OF THE NATION

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

By

CHANCELLOR SAMUEL BLACK McCORMICK,
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH.

JUNE 11, 1916.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much
goods laid up for many years; take thine ease,
eat, drink, be merry."

Luke 12:19.

This man had not learned to think correctly. Indeed, he seems a sort of harmless, good-natured, prosperous person who had never learned to think at all. He had a productive farm whose annual crops constantly increased the riches for which he apparently had no intelligent use.

Like the college which, as its president facetiously remarked, is a most remarkable conservator of knowledge, since the Freshmen annually bring to its great stores of knowledge and the Seniors never take any of it away with them—so this man's harvests simply accumulated, each year adding and taking nothing away, until the problem of taking care of them became a serious tax on his ingenuity. To build larger barns and store his fruits was the most feasible idea which occurred to him. To joy his soul with them, in ease and in unlimited indulgence, was the only conception of use which presented itself. Soil and sun and rain brought the good gifts to him, and it was up to him to show appreciation in the only way he knew how, by feeding them to his soul.

This would be laughable if it were not a tragedy, and one which constantly recurs as generations come and go. He was not the first man who located his soul in his palate, nor the last one; but Jesus has, in this parable, made him a very conspicuous one. Jesus used the story to exhibit the folly of imagining for a moment that a man's life consists in the abundance of his possessions. This deplorable tendency on the part of humankind has as many manifestations of it as there are people.

Jesus did not denounce riches or the people who possessed them. He only taught the truth about them. Jesus never applauded poverty or pronounced blessed the man who possesses nothing. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and the rich man in torment came to their respective habitations not by reason of their poverty or riches, but by reason of their appreciation or lack of appreciation of the values of life. Jesus did recognize the handicap of wealth in the attainment of character, but he never intimated for a moment that wealth was bad or poverty good. He declared, it is true, that love of riches is a root of evil; and in this he states a fact of universal experience. What he meant to teach, however, in this parable, and what he presented again and again in all his teaching, was the supreme importance of understanding life itself, and rightly apportioning its values so as to realize the fulness and beauty and joy of it.

This thing of locating one's soul—or life, as it may be translated—in the wrong place is not only foolish but disastrous. It cannot help but affect the person unfavorably. It is bound to cut off from the soul the proper nourishment, and result in a process of dessication and inanition. It is curious that oftentimes the only thing a man really possesses is the thing which gets from him

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This address was delivered to the 1916 graduating class of the University of Pittsburgh, numbering 428.

During the school year of 1915-1916 there were enrolled 3957 students in the various schools of the University. In addition to these there were many others enrolled in the University extension work throughout Pennsylvania.

This large number of students greatly taxed the ability of the University to house them. The rapid growth of this institution makes more buildings and more equipment urgent necessities. Even now the University is compelled to rent outside buildings and erect temporary shelters for class rooms to accommodate the entire student body.

The activities of the University of Pittsburgh are indispensable in the training of young men and young women for intelligent public and private service, and therefore the University fills a great public need. It constitutes a philanthropy second to none in this great district.

The University feels impelled to put forth an earnest plea for the continued liberal support of the community and the State, in larger measure than heretofore. Such help is absolutely necessary in order that more buildings and more equipment can be secured, to the end that the highest type of education and training may be offered the men and women seeking instruction at this institution.

Gifts to the University.

Harvard University received during the last 12 months total gifts of \$1,138,975. Every year the University funds are increased handsomely by gifts, mostly in the form of bequests. So it is with all the larger and older colleges and universities. Harvard was founded in 1636. Its invested funds in 1909 totaled \$22,716,759. Like Yale, which has over \$10,000,000 in investments, Harvard is made the beneficiary of huge bequests because its progressive educational and research work is a growing asset of the world. Money given to an established educational institution for a definite purpose works to that end for all time, promoting community welfare, in the small sense, by enhancing the prestige and usefulness of the institution, but more largely contributing to the advancement of the human race. The time has gone when even the ignorant do not realize the value to mankind of earnest university work. Appreciation of the worthiness of these efforts is responsible for the many gifts by will to universities for the continuance and enlargement of their endeavors. But not all the money should go to a few institutions if the widest benefits are to be attained.

In the University of Pittsburgh we have an institution firmly planted in the greatest industrial center. It is doing prodigious work not only for the community but for the world. Its educational and research activities are limited only by its pecuniary means to prosecute them. Its contributions to the development of individual fortunes here and elsewhere have been mighty. But the gifts it receives are meager. Why is it that so few of our successful men overlook the University when drafting their wills? Pittsburgh men are keen in business; they are charitable. They make wise investments while living. Why do they neglect an investment that would keep a part of their money actively employed in the common advantage and enroll their names permanently on the scroll of human benefactors when they prepare for death? Here is something worth considering. A bequest to the University of Pittsburgh of a part of one's surplus wealth would be but just recompense for benefits received. Everyone of us does benefit by the work of the University. We all ought to help it to achieve the fullest measure of usefulness. It needs funds for the purpose. It ought to be a Pittsburgh habit to include in every will a bequest to the University of Pittsburgh.

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UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

1916

College; 686 students

School of Economics; 1025 students

School of Education; 1099 students

School of Engineering; 246 students

School of Mines; 88 students

School of Chemistry; 28 students

Graduate School; 145 students

(All of these schools use State and Thaw Halls and seven temporary structures on the University Campus. The School of Education also uses rented quarters at No. 3439 Fifth Avenue.)

School of Medicine; 129 students

Pennsylvania Hall, University Campus

School of Law; 176 students

Rented offices in Frick Building Annex

School of Dentistry; 271 students

Dental Building, University Campus

School of Pharmacy; 241 students

Pharmacy Building, Pride and Bluff Streets

Mellon Institute of Industrial Research,

University Campus.

Allegheny Observatory,

Riverview Park

University Extension Courses, in various parts of Pennsylvania (See last page)

ENROLMENT

Total Students, June, 1916	4134
Reduction for duplicate registration	177
Total enrolment	3957
Total Students in State and Thaw Halls and Temporary Buildings	3124
Total Students on University Campus	3524
Total Students away from University Campus	610

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

During the recently closed school year, 1,034 lectures and addresses were delivered by 85 members of the University of Pittsburgh faculty. The approximate total attendance was 127,365. These lectures included 34 complete courses, in addition to a large number of single lectures and addresses. Forty-three centers were supplied with motion pictures, 714 exhibitions being given. The estimated attendance was 513,000.

least care and culture. It is impossible to nourish the soul with a farm or a bond; yet multitudes of people are making no other provision than this for soul nutriment. A picture on a man's wall may cost him thousands; but it has to become a part of a man's soul before it can be of any actual value to him. No man in this world has anything except what is worked up into the warp and woof of his life.

Since this is so he should be exceedingly careful in selecting materials for assimilation. The man in the parable proposed to feed his soul corn. If he had not died suddenly, before he had a chance to carry out his plan, he probably would have succeeded: only when the thing was accomplished his soul would have been corn, too, and consequently of little value. The time will come when every life will be put through a test of fire. What remains when the process is over will represent the accumulated value of his thought, his sacrifice, his toil and his achievement. Common sense would plainly urge a man, therefore, to give to this supreme thing supreme consideration.

To find one's soul and care for it is manifestly the chief end of man. It is the chief end of society, the chief end of the nation. Only incidentally are *things* concerned with this problem. Yet most people as well as most nations busy themselves principally with *things*. Things are of value only in so far as they can be worked up into character. Let us meditate for a little while upon this truth this morning.

The first defect in this man's mental processes was that he considered only himself. It was not simply that the meaning of life had never revealed itself to him. It was that he had no concern for any one else, in connection

with himself. A good many people are like him. Most of us are disposed to act on the principle that our whole concern is to take care of ourselves and let others do likewise. The principle is a correct one if it is not carried too far. We forget, however, that we can take care of ourselves only as we take thought for others. As well attempt to hang an apple tree out on a hickory limb and expect a crop of apples, as to attempt to nurture one's soul into fulness of growth and richness of power by giving exclusive attention to it alone. I am not talking here of the vice of selfishness. I am talking simply about the folly of it. No man ever got happiness by seeking it. Like the other best things of life, even character itself, happiness is a by-product. It results from getting into perfect accord with environment. The apple tree pendant had plenty of sunshine and all the rain there was; but it did not have the essential elements which the earth contributed through the roots. Life tragedies are not so much the result of wrongdoing as they are the result of wrong thinking. Selfishness is not so much of a hurt to other people as it is a hurt to oneself. The wrong of it consists in denying the soul the only thing which can make it grow. People know this when they stop to think about it; but the trouble is they are so eager to accumulate by getting things that they fail to remember that the only way they can get what is worth having is by giving out themselves in service to other people. This rich man is a conspicuous illustration of this fact.

He was guilty, too, of employing a wrong method. He proposed to feed his soul on corn and let it have a good time, in ease, in merriment, and in indulgence. It was a little like the man who proposed to fool his hens

by gradually substituting sawdust for oatmeal. When he had the experiment at the point of success, his hens died. The soul cannot be fooled with activity, and toil, and money, and power, and success. When the man achieves them he finds that the soul has died. It must have friendship and beauty and knowledge and grace and love and goodness and sympathy and service. It has no time for ease and indulgence. It finds its joy in the things which the eye cannot see, not in things which one measures with a bushel or buys by the pound. No wonder Jesus called the man foolish. He might have used a much stronger term and still have kept far within the limit of truth.

All this would have been both comic and tragic enough if it had been the extent of his folly. He didn't stop here, however. He assumed that those big barns would hold the only accumulations which made life worth while. He forgot the fundamental fact of existence, that the only thing a man really has is not the fruits stored in barns, the merchandise in warehouses, and the securities in the safe deposit, but the qualities of soul stored up in his own personality. It is pathetic the mistake men make in evaluating life. Wealth is a wonderful thing. It is stored-up power. It is the product of brain, energy, enterprise, foresight, self-denial. It not only develops resources, constructs railways, and manufactures goods; it also founds universities, builds hospitals and churches, and sends the truth to the uttermost parts of the earth. God bless the man who knows how to create wealth and who makes its distribution possible. I am not talking now, however, about the good money will do in the world; only of what happens to the man who confuses it with his life and imagines

that they are equivalents, or at least that they may be so assimilated as to become identical. There comes a time in every life when what the man wants is sympathy, friendship, esteem, forgiveness, grace. He gets them in the exact measure in which he has made himself worthy of them. What profits the man that at the supreme hour he possess everything else but an enriched and full-grown soul?

The glory of it and the dread significance of it, too, is that the whole matter is left with the individual. He can do as he pleases about it. He can deliberately face to the right and march straight to heaven, or deliberately face to the left and march straight to hell. Probably he would do the former always and the latter never, if he should stop to think about life; if he should honestly seek to discover his soul and nurture it. By this I do not mean that a man shall deliberately set to work, by a process of introspection, to discover something which is within him and proceed to analyze and appraise it; then label it so he will know it as his soul. I fear he would require for this a magnifying glass more powerful than any to be found in stock at the manufactory. What I do mean is that whatever scheme of life he adopts he will remember that his main business is to learn to care supremely for things of real worth—kindness, goodness, self-control, justice, holiness, truth, friendship, sympathy, understanding, grace; and that he will have the good sense to know that he will possess these things in the measure in which he exercises them toward his fellows. Herein he will find his soul and nourish it; and he can then work as hard at his business or profession as his energy commands, and throw himself into any undertaking with deathless ardor up to the full measure of his ambition.

To do one's task is one thing. To live one's life is another; and the latter is the vital fact of existence. Commonplace as this is, it is the one secret which gives significance to a human life. I sometimes wonder what we are here for, anyway. The farmer toiling in the sun for sixty years, and dies; the millhand toiling in the hot breath of the furnace for thirty years, and dies; the merchant toiling in the counting room forty years, and dies—what return have they for their toil? What have they gotten out of it? How can they get anything out of it? Is there anything for the man more than for the horse which draws his plough, the dog which trots by his side, the fly which tickles his nose? How can a man explain to himself his own existence, and justify it by the way he lives his life? Every man will have to propound this query for himself and discover the answer; and I counsel him to do it. The answer will be found somewhere in what Jesus calls the soul or the life; not in the things which are outside him or the accumulation he leaves behind him.

It is silly to interpret life in terms of happiness or in terms of knowledge or in terms of success or in terms of power or in terms of wealth or in terms of toil, or in terms of anything which has not in itself the very essence of eternity—deathless in its power of resistance to any destroying power. The earlier in the allotted period of three-score years and ten the individual proposes to find out what he is here for, the more completely he may realize the meaning of his life. If life is only a little streak of vitality between two eternities, with no significant relation to either, he should know it. If on the other hand life has relationship to some infinite personality with whom its destiny is inextricably connected

and in whom alone the joy and sorrow of it, the toil and toll of it, the pain and ecstasy of it, the disappointment and achievement of it can find adequate explanation and justification, then as a sensible man he will find out this fact and be governed by it. The folly of the man in the parable was that this thought did not occur to him. For him it had no existence. It seems indeed hardly worth while to give any attention to a soul of this sort, since it is so obviously and so frankly material—except of course as a warning to avoid its disastrous folly.

Sometimes it happens that what a man will not do for himself he will do for others. Many people without knowing it are immensely bigger than they seem to themselves to be. Let them move along in their accustomed groove, absorbed in their daily tasks, and they never wake to the fact that they have a soul at all. Let some calamity threaten themselves, their community, their nation, and they rouse to a new consciousness of life—to the duty, the responsibility, and the glory of it. Often-times nothing short of a tragedy will bring a soul to its real self-consciousness. Such tragedy always becomes a masked blessing. Vital for the individual that he shall awake, it is still more vital that the nation shall reach its self-consciousness and discover that, in comparison with its material wealth, its soul is infinitely priceless. Even if it cost a Liege and a Rheims, it is a small price for France to pay that the people should awaken to the great fact that the nation possesses a soul of heroic grandeur, of supreme courage, self-sacrifice and endurance; and that the fact proclaims itself by the very majesty and splendor of it, with irresistible power and with marvelous inspiration to all the peoples of the world.

I look with a solemn feeling of elation, of gratitude, of aspiring and expectant hope, upon the daily recurring scenes of these June days in America, when countless thousands of boys and girls, of young men and women, are passing out from schools and colleges and universities to swell the stream of American energy, vitality, enthusiasm, service, and achievement.

The very thought of what it means to the nation and to the world warms the blood that has chilled with the years, kindles the hope which had flagged with its disappointments, and begets a new ardor of enthusiasm which had died down with its defeats; and in those whose blood never chills, whose enthusiasm never abates, and whose hope never declines it produces a new stimulus, a new ardor of devotion, a new elation of power, a new assurance of victory which touches the spirit into omnipotence.

But if I thought that the youth of America would, in their absorption in self-interest, forget to care for their country; if I thought that these young people would, in their ambition for America's greatness and power as a world nation, forget the soul of America, its fineness of spirit, its enthusiasm for humanity, its ideal of high service, its placing the things of the spirit far above the things of the flesh, then all my elation, enthusiasm and hopefulness would be gone; and in their place would be born doubt and fear, dread and despair; for then I should know that America, too, would, like the nations of centuries gone which made the mistake, go down into the vortex of ruin which in all the ages has swallowed nations which loved power and forgot God.

I do not so fear; and to me this June month is full of the inspiration which strengthens the arm, fires the

heart, and energizes the will for loyal service to country and for altruistic endeavor for mankind.

But should we build navies, train armies, and make guns and ammunition if this be our national ideal? Should we give military instruction in colleges and universities, establish summer camps for the learning of war, train our women in hospital skill, and organize our resources for quick mobilization and action? Yea, verily; as long as there are peoples who believe in the arbitrament of armed force, in the justice of physical might. But if there lurks danger that in such preparation for defense the soul of America should receive hurt, then let us have a care that through renewed emphasis upon high ideal, unselfish purpose and altruistic endeavor we kindle bright in the soul of America the fire of devotion to truth, to honor, to liberty, to justice, and to humanity.

If America abhor thrift, give herself over to indulgence and extravagance, and fail to lay hold upon her opportunity to gain world markets and finance world industrial projects, America thereby loses an opportunity which will probably never come again, and thereby loses an opportunity of financial and industrial leadership which would be infinitely desirable; and in so doing makes proclamation of the fact that America is not yet ready to lay hold upon her destiny. But if America put on the habit of thrift, gird herself to toil, inure herself to sacrificial endurance, go forth worthily to meet her opportunity and, possessing world markets, leading world industries, gaining world triumphs, accomplish this great undertaking only to increase America's wealth and power and lordship over the world, then the hurt to the nation would be infinitely greater than the mere

failure to seize the opportunity of material greatness which seems just at hand.

Just as America must have military power, the unquestioned ability to defend herself against any attack, if she is ever to attain dominating influence as a teacher of arbitration, conciliation and law, in settling international differences, instead of armed force; so if America is to have dominating influence as a teacher of truth, of honor, of justice, of liberty, of service, of the rule of the spiritual over the material forces of civilization, she should be great in her industries, her finance, her commerce, her merchantmen, and in her material riches; for only so can she demonstrate that she puts these as second in value to the higher values which make up the very soul of the nation—that it is the soul of America, the spirit of the nation, which rules, which dominates all her activities, which controls all her resources, and which leads in ever-ascending progress toward the dominion of truth over ignorance, of freedom over oppression, of honor over gain, of justice over force, and of service and blessedness and peace over self-seeking and power as the ideals both of the people and of the nation of America.

And it all depends on us. If we do not believe these things; or if, believing them, we do not consider them vital enough to practice them, then the soul of America will never grow into the beneficent, dominating, controlling moral and spiritual force which it ought to become. If the people amass wealth and know no use for it but to build greater barns to store it, then the nation will do this same thing and be guilty of the same monumental stupidity as the man in the parable.

Just when we have attained, this same voice will be again heard: "Thou foolish America, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? Thy soul, O America, was the important thing; and thou didst forget it. Thy soul, O America, is the reason, the hope, the use of thy riches; and thou didst starve it, stifle it, neglect it, and now, having lost that which will make thy power a blessing, I shall require that of thee—and thou shalt forever die."

It is ours to guard against this great and stupid sin by purposing that so far as in us lies we shall choose, as the first duty, the cultivating in ourselves, and using our influence to cultivate in the people of our country, the moral and spiritual qualities which make up the soul of our people. The man in the parable located his soul in his appetite. He is exactly like the man who locates it in his business or in his pleasure or in his taste or in his blameless life.

I speak to young men and women who are of different nationalities, religions, customs, and ideals. To all alike I wish to say that if we locate our soul in any other than in God; if we seek to cultivate it except Godward, we shall utterly fail so far as concerns ourselves and so far as concerns our country.

To me God's Fatherhood and man's sonship is the ultimate in all my striving, in all my thinking, and in all my aspiring; to me God is friend, companion, helper, guide, the pardoner of my sins, the restorer of my soul, the builder of my spirit, the maker and perfecter of my life. My religion responds to the sentiment expressed in such words as these:

"Just as I am; Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
.....
O Lamb of God, I come."

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load;
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash the crimson stains
White in his blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains."

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cleanse from every sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within;
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity."

I am, however, the last person to insist that any other person's religion shall express itself as mine does, or to give to any one else the exact formula which shall serve for his religious faith and needs. A man's religion is a personal thing between himself and his God, and a stranger should not intermeddle with it. If anything should be sacred to oneself it is his faith; it is the secrets of one's soul; it is the holy of holies where one converses and holds communion with his Father, seeks His forgiveness, feels His restoring power, gets the joy and strength and inspiration which can come from the Father alone. What I do insist upon, however, is that we make an irreparable mistake if for one moment we imagine that we can care for our own soul and for the soul of America if we seek it apart from God; if we put aside what we call religion; if we disregard the pleadings of

the immortal spirit and rely upon the aids, the incentives and inspirations which men alone create. Only in God whence we have come, to whom we must return, can we find the creative power wherewith to build up and fit for its eternal habitation the soul of the man; and only in Him can the soul of the nation be fashioned and made rich in the things which make for national wellbeing and which carried over into the nations of the world make for the weal of humankind.

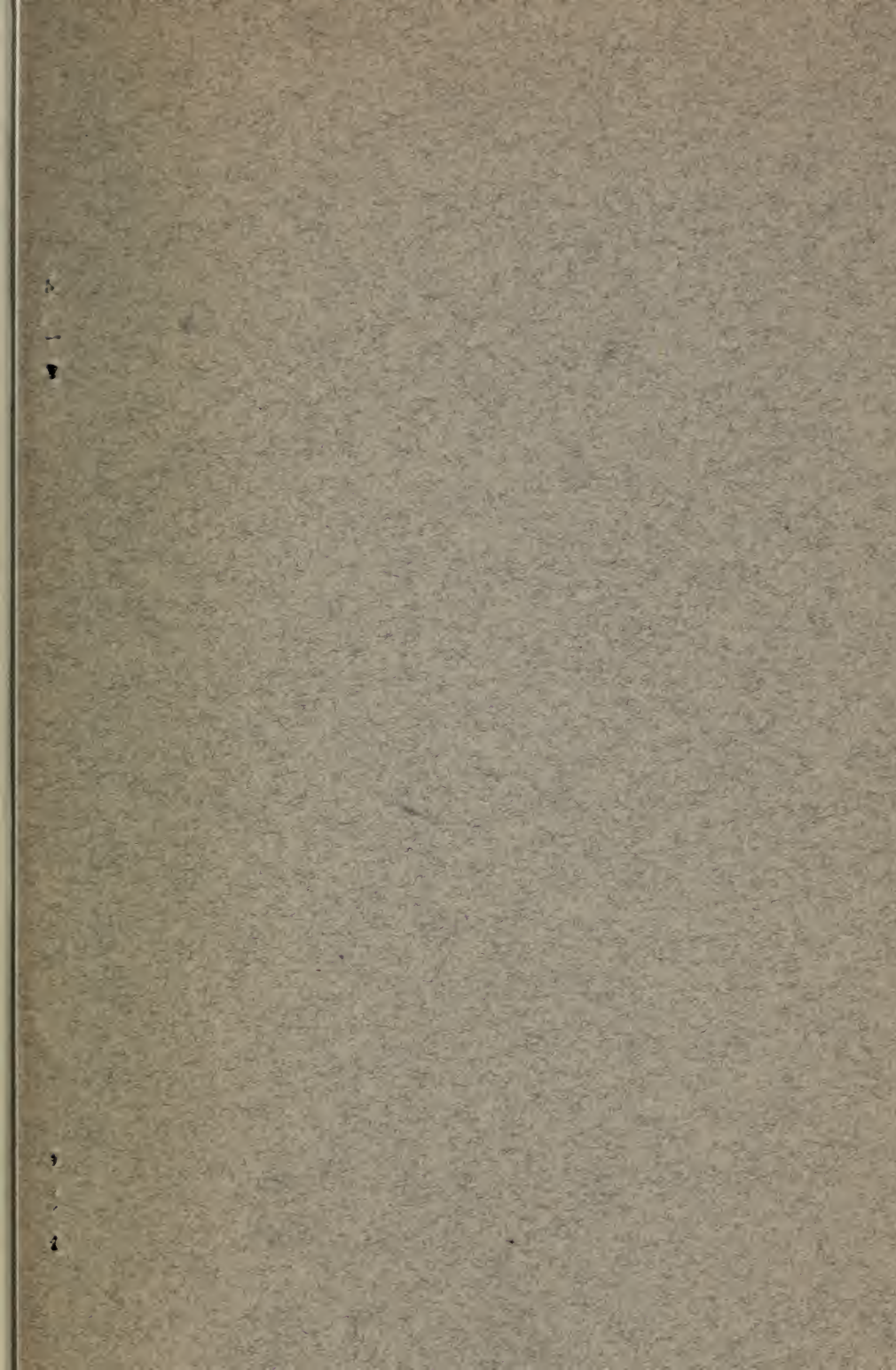
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS:

Always the present is all we have, and therefore the most important thing we have.

Surely, however, this present day is the most important among all the days the world has known. Soon the frightful war devastating Europe will cease, and the problem of rehabilitating the world's stricken civilization must be taken up and every intelligent person must make some contribution to this process of reconstruction.

Most predictions are perilous; but one certain prediction we can easily make at this time, and this is that democracy is to be henceforth a vastly more vital world fact than at any other time in the world's history. This means a vastly enlarged individual opportunity and responsibility. Always has it been true that a man is his brother's keeper; that he cannot live to himself; that his mission is to serve his fellows. This is tremendously true in this epochal period in the history of mankind. The times call for consecrated men and women, for high-souled men and women, for intelligence and altruism and power; and you are the people who must respond to this call.

Be the best you know how as lawyers, as physicians, as engineers, as teachers, and the rest; give your days and your nights to your mental and moral and professional equipment for your life work; but purpose in this solemn hour, as you stand on the threshold of your career, that your chief care will be for your soul and that, in the service you will render to mankind, you will help to build up and make perfect the soul of America that she may, in the fulfilment of the divine plan, be fitted to render her high and holy service to the nations of the world. God counsel you, guide you, keep you, enlarge you, and in the satisfaction of your hopes for material success give you the higher satisfaction which comes from serving well your day and generation among men.





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